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# GOPAL AND THE COWHERD



A BHARAT FOLK TALE  
BY SHANU

This is a folktale which has delighted children all over India.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to narrate stories of this kind to his disciples to illustrate his teachings. This story explains the power of faith. The total faith of Gopal's mother is in sharp contrast with the teacher's disbelief.

This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the version in *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* by Sister Nivedita.

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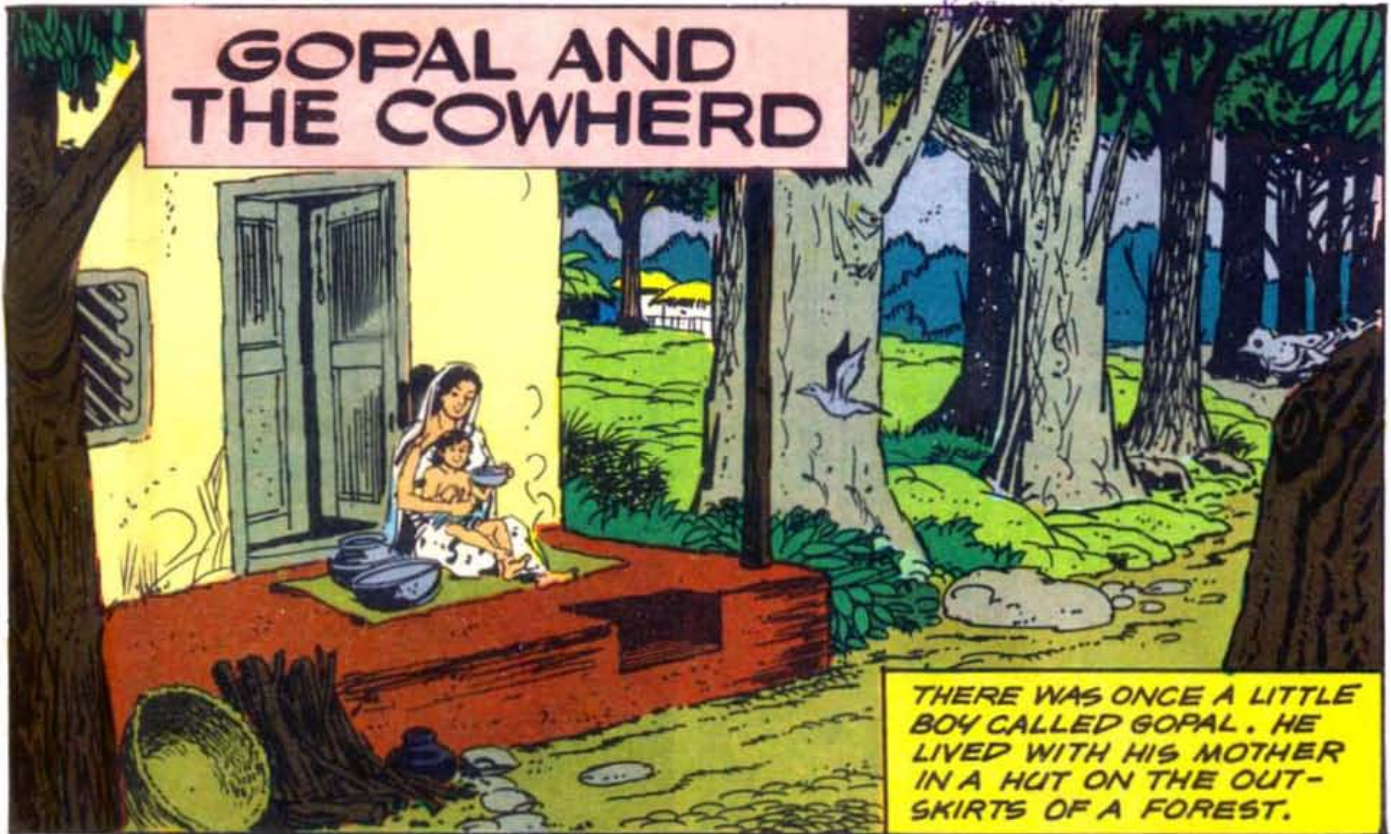
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# GOPAL AND THE COWHERD



THERE WAS ONCE A LITTLE BOY CALLED GOPAL. HE LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER IN A HUT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A FOREST.

GOPAL'S FATHER HAD DIED BEFORE GOPAL WAS BORN. SO MOTHER AND SON HAD NO ONE TO SUPPORT THEM.

THERE IS NO MORE MILK IN THE HOUSE. WHAT SHALL I DO?



BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE WERE VERY HELPFUL.

SISTER, I HAVE BROUGHT SOME MILK FOR GOPAL.

YOU ARE SO GOOD TO US.









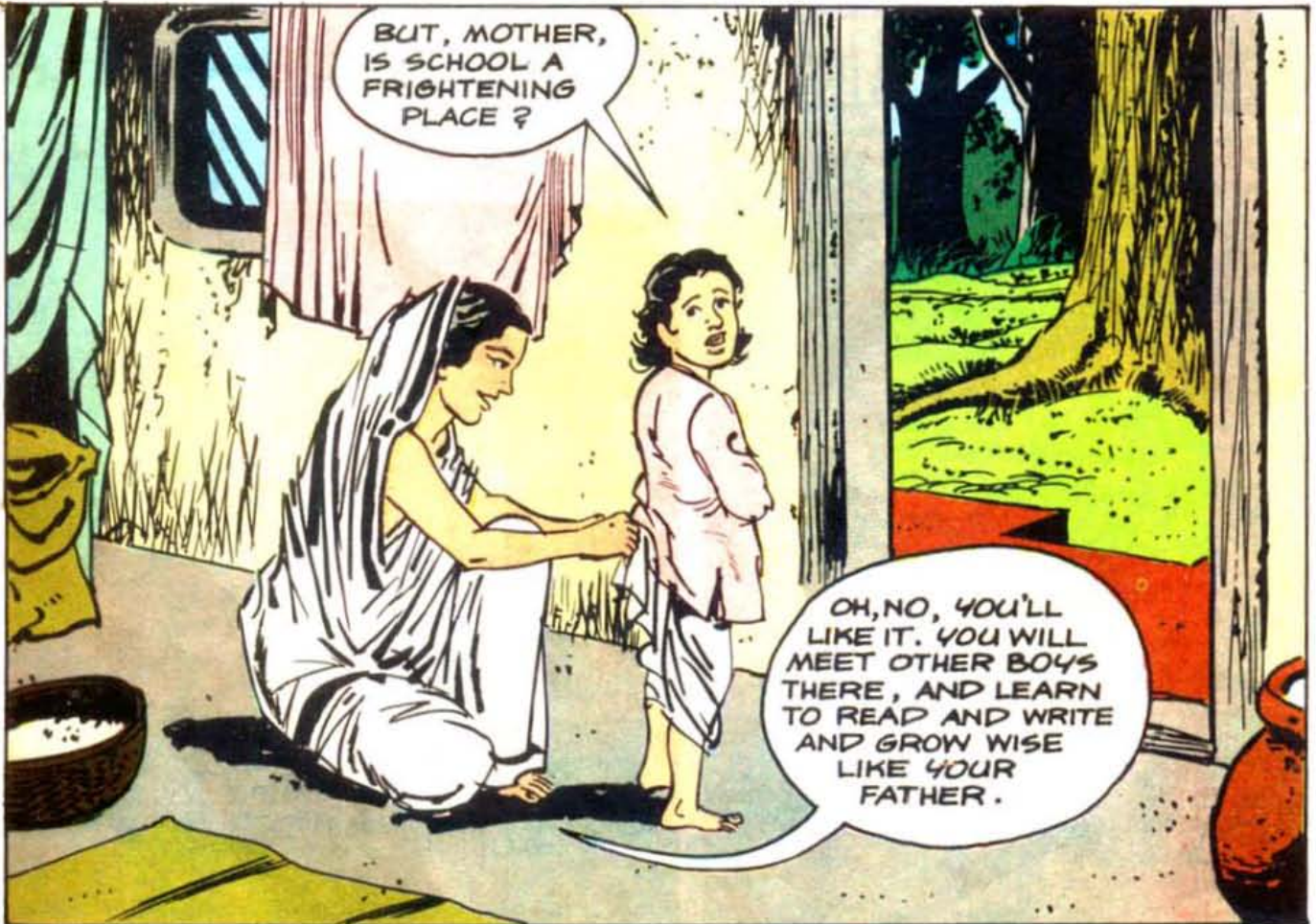
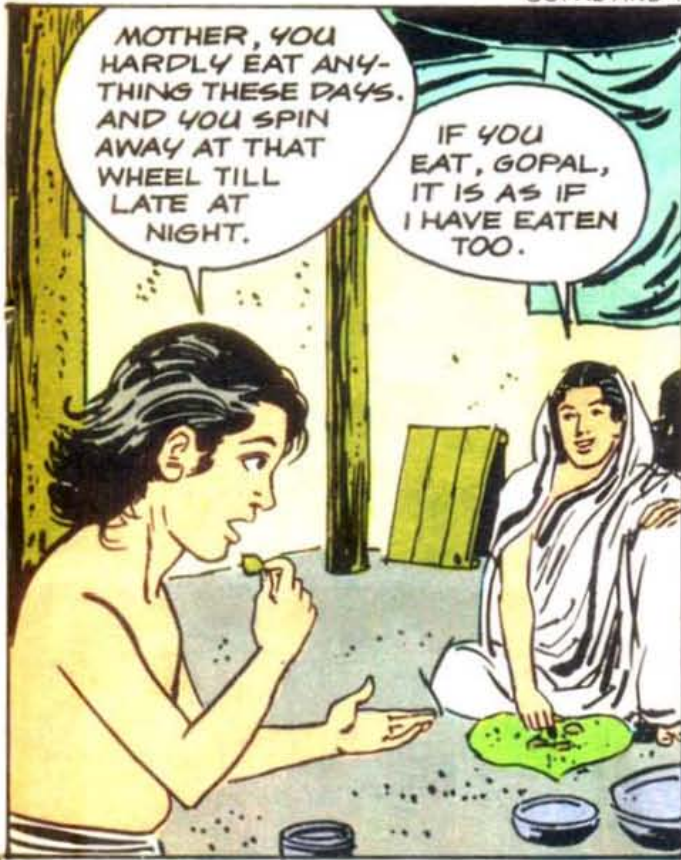




SOON GOPAL GREW UP INTO A YOUNG BOY.













... THE TREES BEGAN  
TO CLOSE IN .

IT IS SO  
FRIGHTENING  
HERE . HAVE  
I LOST MY  
WAY ?



THE  
BRANCHES  
LOOK AS IF  
THEY ARE  
COMING TO  
CATCH ME .



GOPAL  
BEGAN  
TO WALK  
FASTER .

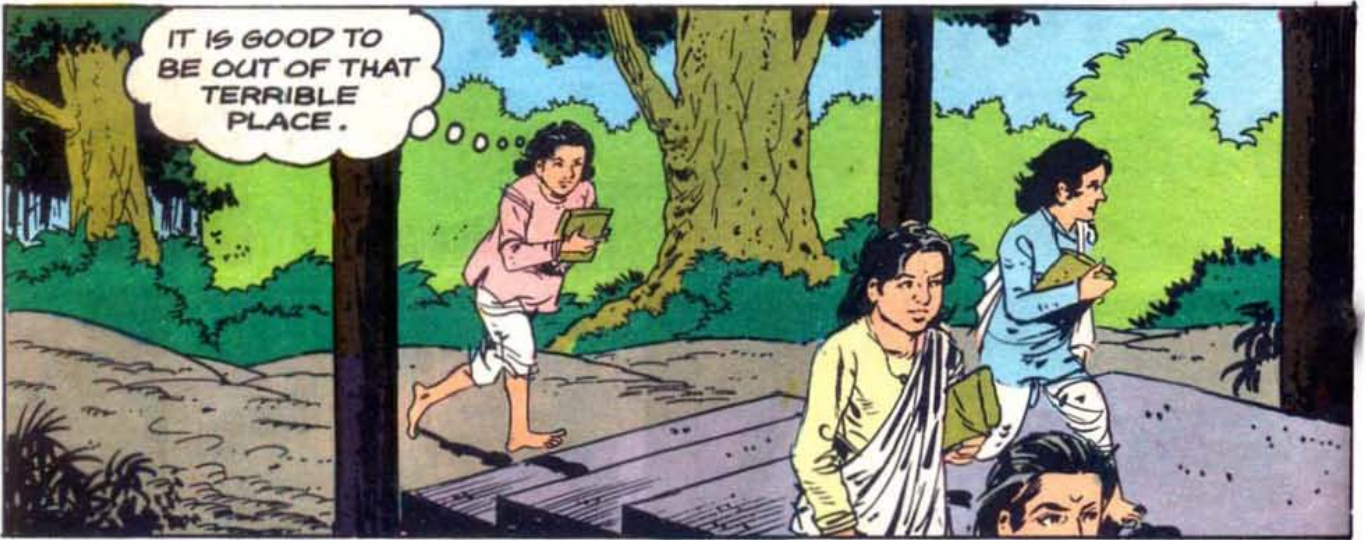




AT LAST, HE CAME TO THE END OF THE FOREST.

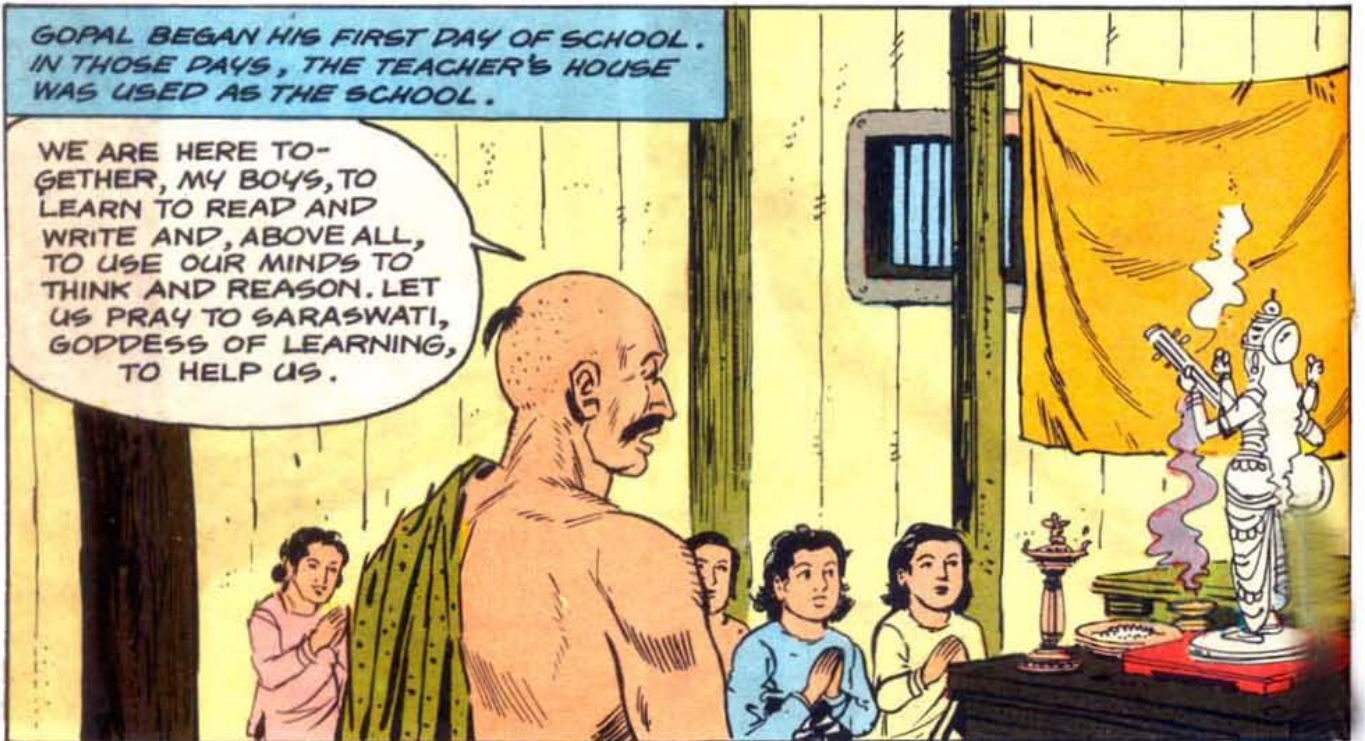


IT IS GOOD TO  
BE OUT OF THAT  
TERRIBLE  
PLACE.



GOPAL BEGAN HIS FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.  
IN THOSE DAYS, THE TEACHER'S HOUSE  
WAS USED AS THE SCHOOL.

WE ARE HERE TO-  
GETHER, MY BOYS, TO  
LEARN TO READ AND  
WRITE AND, ABOVE ALL,  
TO USE OUR MINDS TO  
THINK AND REASON. LET  
US PRAY TO SARASWATI,  
GODDESS OF LEARNING,  
TO HELP US.



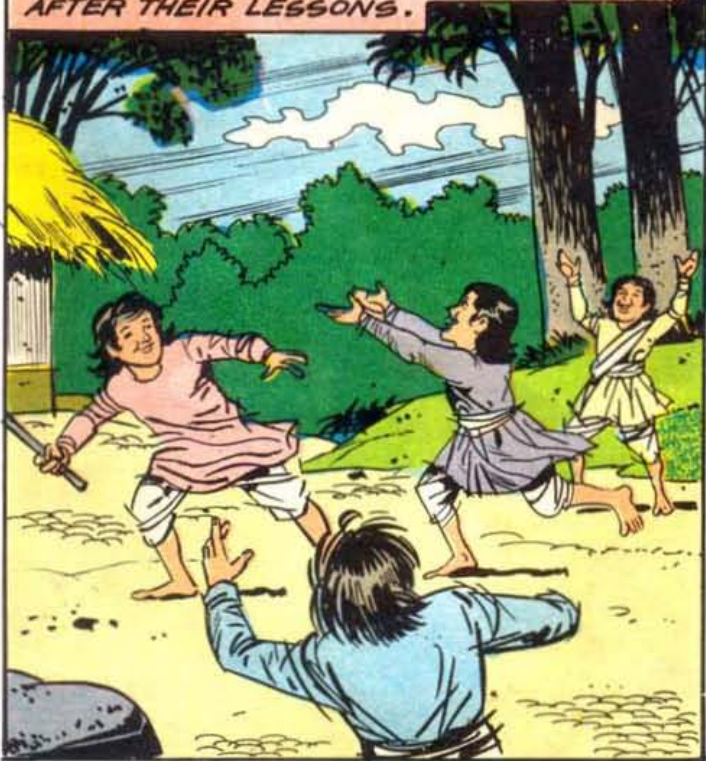


GOPAL HAD A GOOD DAY, ENJOYING ALL THAT HE WAS LEARNING.



IT WAS THE PRACTICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO WRITE THEIR FIRST LETTERS IN SAND. LATER, THEY WROTE ON STIFF PALMYRA LEAVES.

GOPAL MADE FRIENDS WITH THE OTHER BOYS AND THEY PLAYED TOGETHER AFTER THEIR LESSONS.



BUT AS EVENING APPROACHED —

OH, I'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE FOREST AGAIN ....



AS HE WALKED HOME, HIS FOOTSTEPS BEGAN TO SLOW DOWN.

I AM SO AFRAID.





IT HAD GROWN QUITE  
PARK. SUDDENLY—



MEANWHILE, AT HOME —

IT IS TIME  
MY LITTLE  
ONE CAME  
HOME.



HERE  
HE  
COMES.

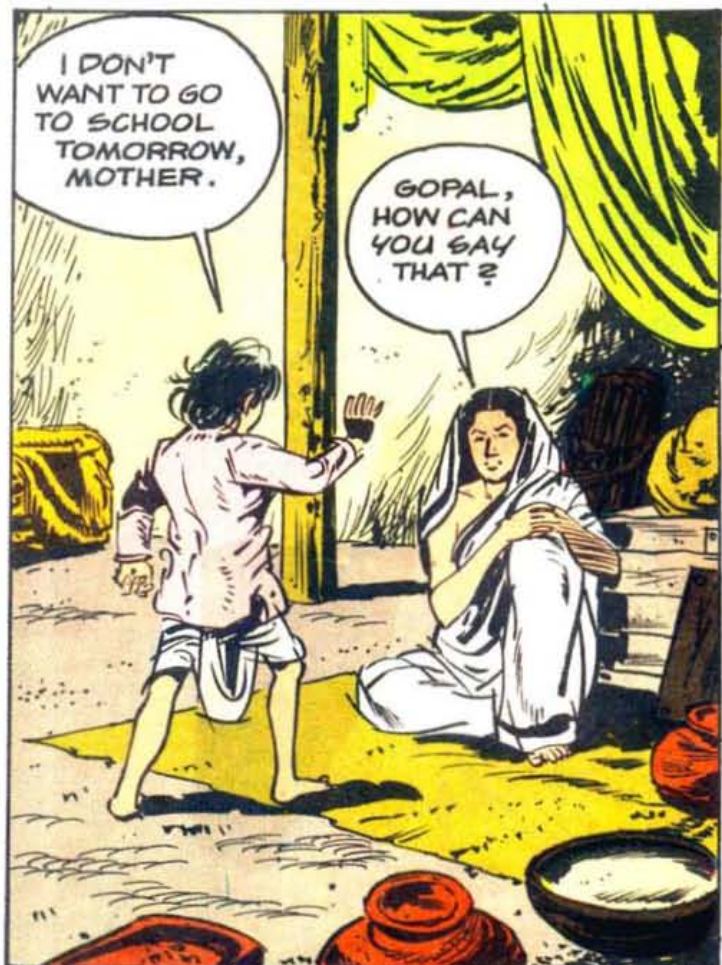


MY SON, YOU  
ARE TREMBLING  
LIKE A LEAF. AND  
SO WHITE IN THE  
FACE! WHAT IS  
IT?

OH  
MOTHER,  
MOTHER,  
MOTHER—









AND GOPAL STOOD THERE, LOOKING ASHAMED AND MISERABLE.



THAT NIGHT, GOPAL'S MOTHER WAS VERY WORRIED.



THE NEXT MORNING—

OTHER CHILDREN HAVE BROTHERS, UNCLES OR SERVANTS TO TAKE THEM TO SCHOOL. WHO DO WE HAVE, MY POOR GOPAL?



WHO DO WE HAVE? YES, OF COURSE! WE HAVE LORD KRISHNA! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF HIM BEFORE?



DEAR LORD, YOU ARE THE FATHER OF THE POOR. YOU PROTECT ALL. I KNOW YOU WILL PROTECT MY GOPAL.

















AGAIN GOPAL CALLED OUT.

BROTHER  
GOPAL,  
WHERE ARE  
YOU ?

THERE WAS A RUSTLE IN THE BUSHES AND—

I AM  
COMING,  
LITTLE  
BROTHER.

COME  
QUICKLY, BRO-  
THER. I AM  
AFRAID.

THE NEXT MOMENT —

OH !

HERE  
I AM,  
GOPAL.















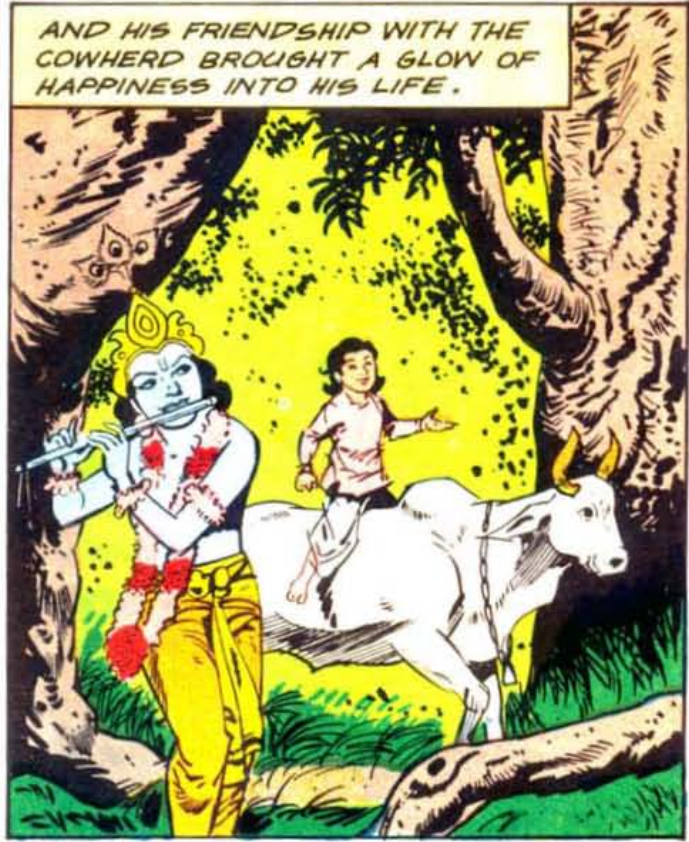




FROM THAT DAY ON-  
WARDS, GOPAL LOST  
HIS FEAR OF THE  
FOREST.



AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE  
COWHERD BROUGHT A GLOW OF  
HAPPINESS INTO HIS LIFE.



ONE DAY, IN SCHOOL —

HAVE YOU  
HEARD ? OUR  
TEACHER IS GOING  
TO GIVE A FEAST  
TOMORROW.

YES, AND  
WE MUST ALL  
BRING HIM  
GIFTS.



WHAT  
ARE YOU  
BRINGING  
FOR HIM,  
GOPAL ?

I... I DON'T  
KNOW. I'LL  
HAVE TO ASK  
MY MOTHER.

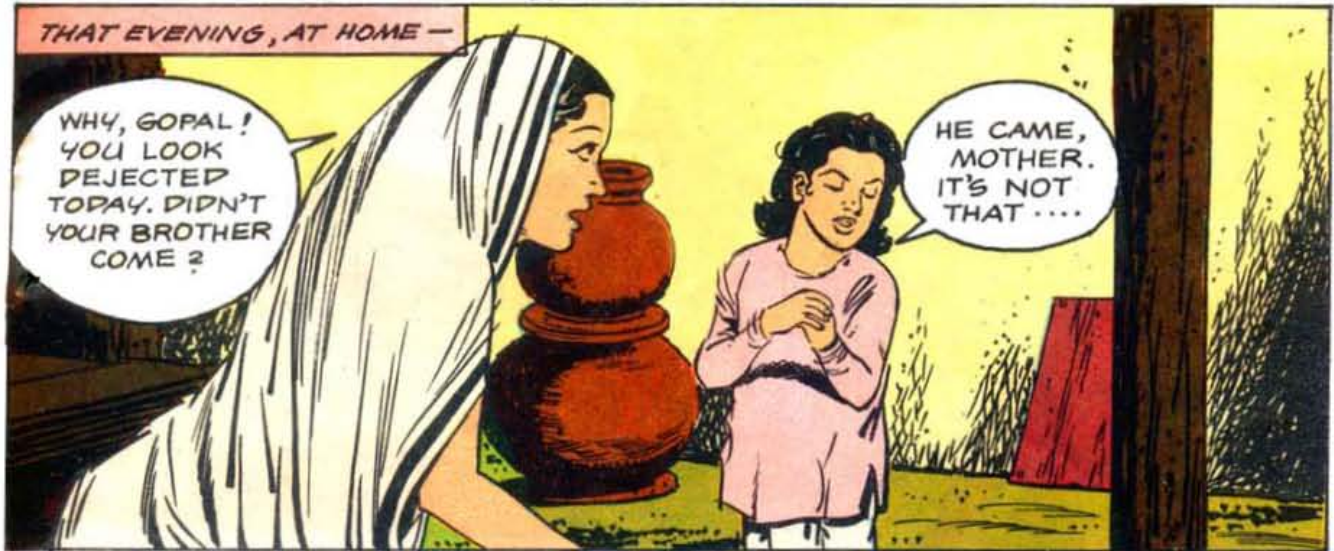




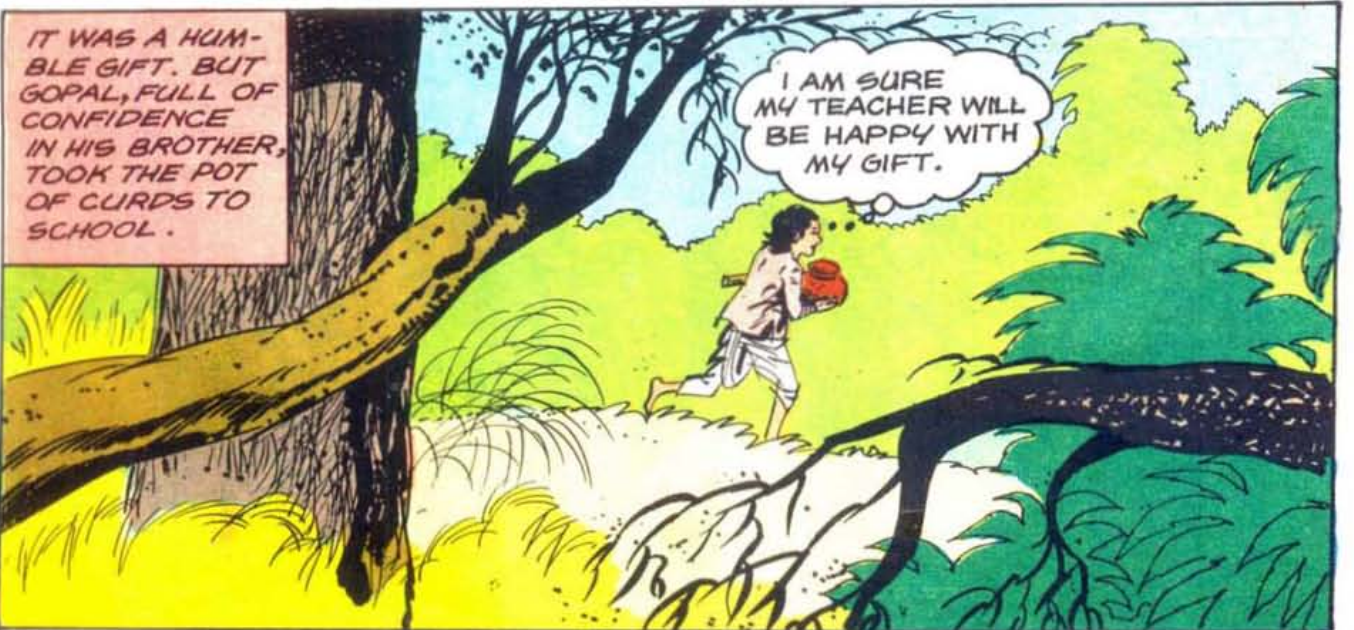




THAT EVENING, AT HOME —





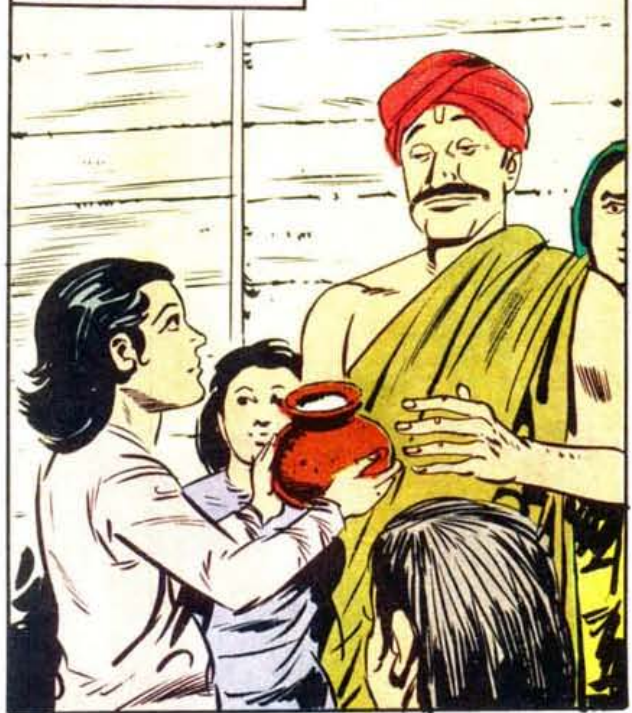




AT SCHOOL, THE CHILDREN BEGAN TO OFFER THEIR GIFTS TO THE TEACHER AND HIS WIFE.



WHEN GOPAL'S TURN CAME, THE TEACHER TOOK THE POT A LITTLE COLDLY. TEARS WELLED UP IN GOPAL'S EYES.



SEEING HIS TEARS, THE TEACHER REGRETTED HIS COLDNESS.



THE CURDS WERE SERVED DURING THE FEAST.

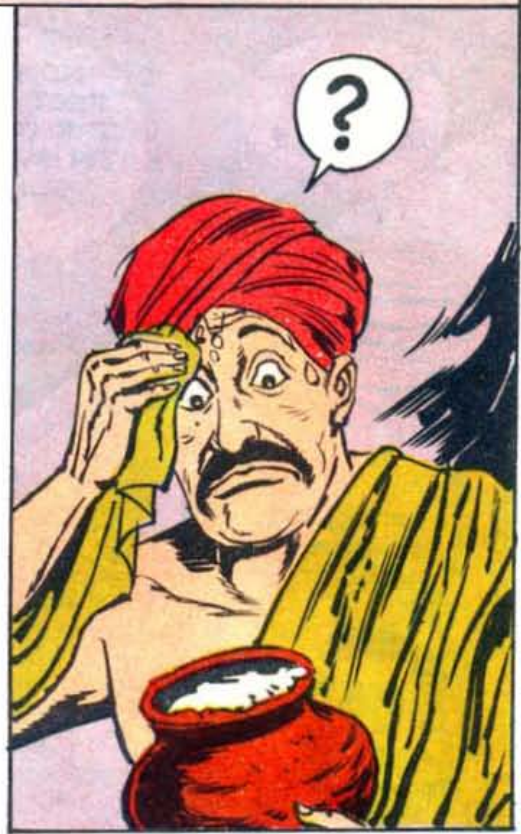




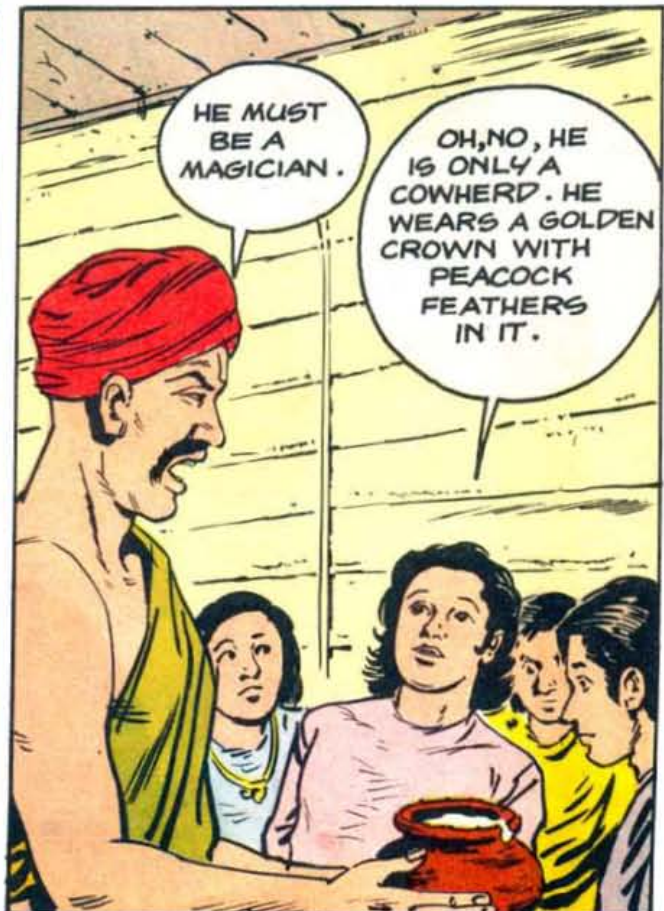
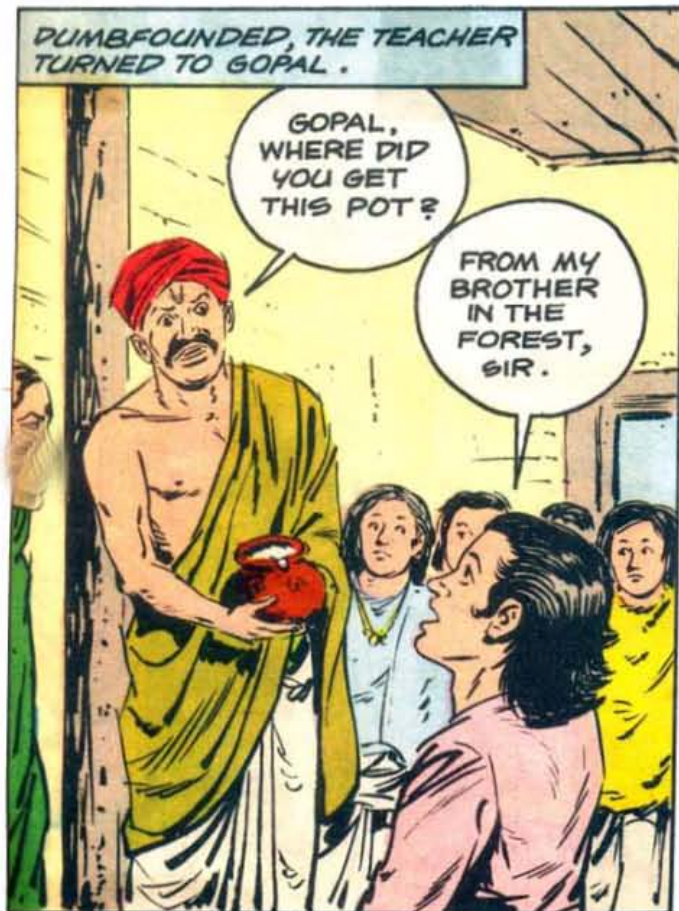




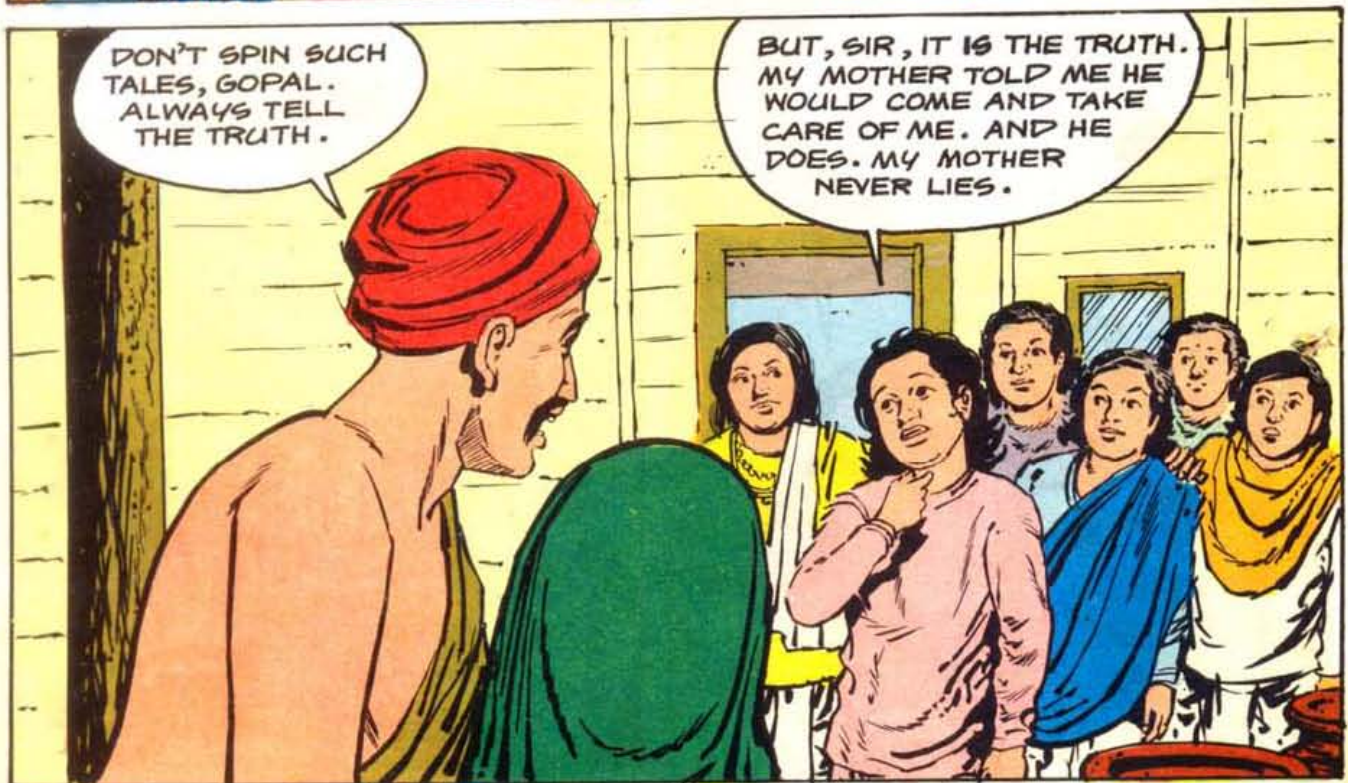
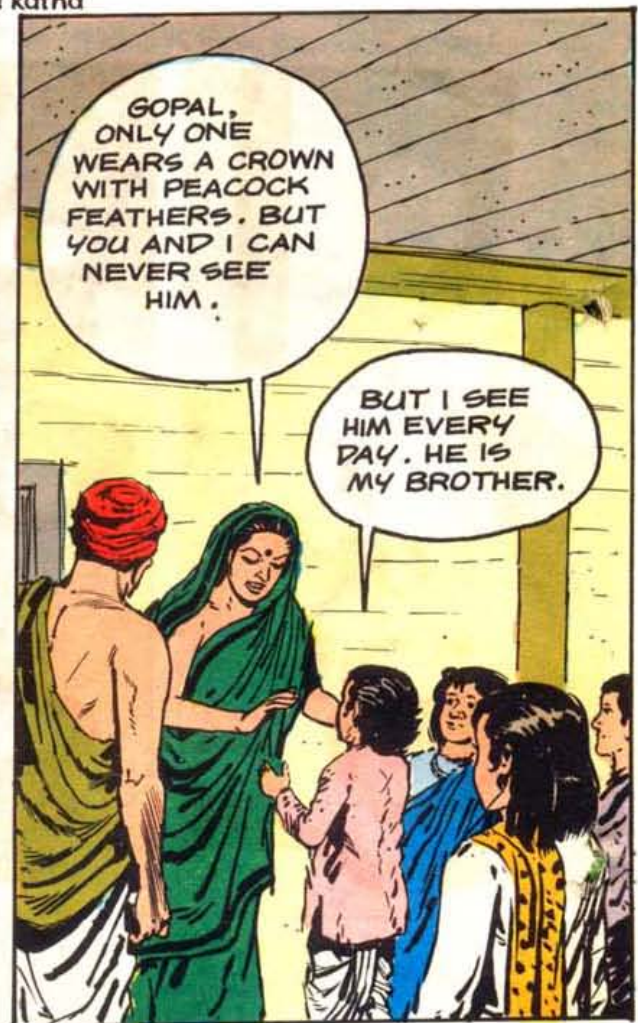
THE TEACHER POURED AND POURED, BUT STILL THE POT OF CURDS REMAINED FULL.



DUMBFOUNDED, THE TEACHER TURNED TO GOPAL.











GOPAL TOOK HIS TEACHER INTO THE FOREST, AND WHEN THEY REACHED THE THICKEST PART —



THERE WAS NO ANSWER. GOPAL CALLED AGAIN.









THE SOUND OF THE FLUTE ROSE MELODIOUSLY AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE. THE TEACHER FELL TO HIS KNEES.

MY LORD, MY LORD, I HAVE HEARD YOU. THROUGH A YOUNG CHILD, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME NOT TO SCORN THE HUMBLE.



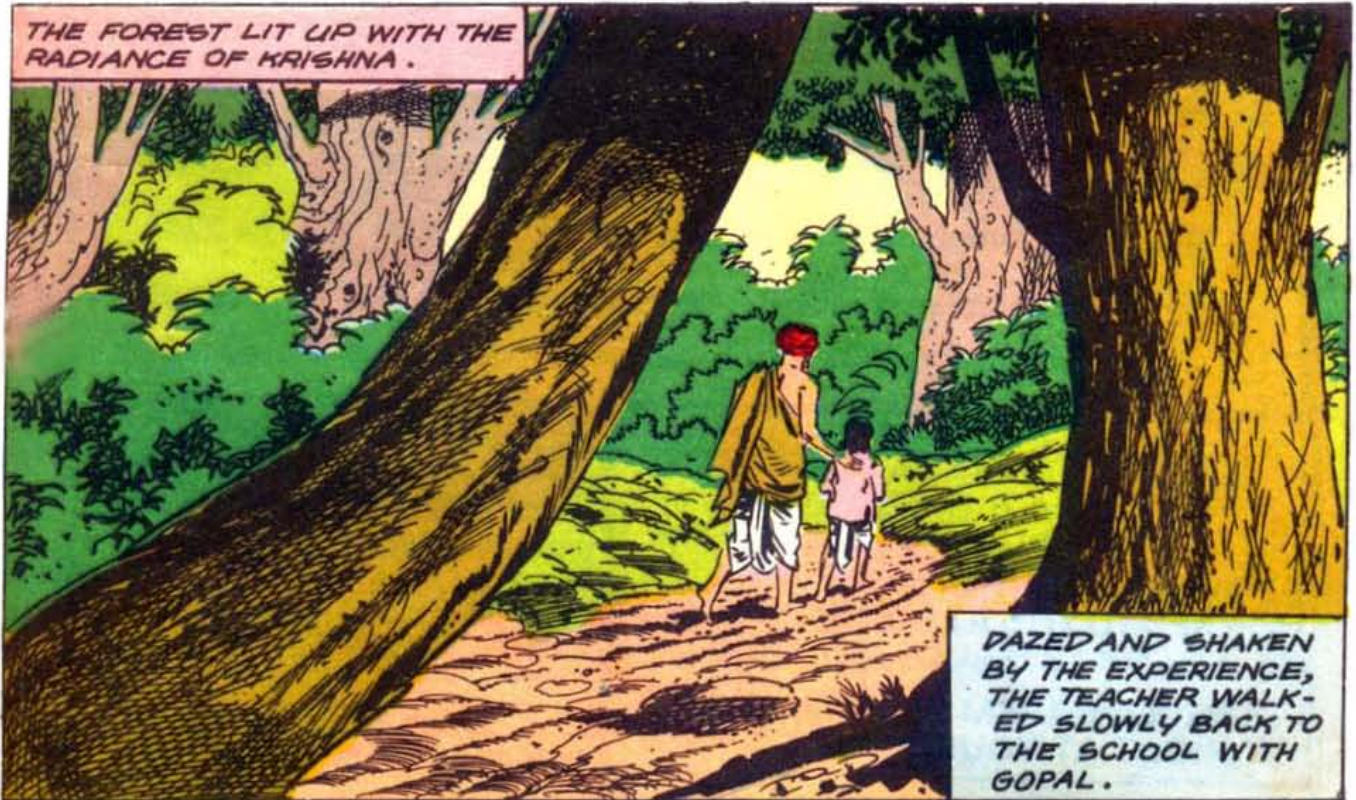
GOPAL KNEW NOW WHO HIS BROTHER REALLY WAS.



BECAUSE OF YOU, MY CHILD, WE HAVE PARTAKEN OF CURDS FROM THE VERY HANDS OF THE LORD.



THE FOREST LIT UP WITH THE RADIANCE OF KRISHNA.



DAZED AND SHAKEN BY THE EXPERIENCE, THE TEACHER WALKED SLOWLY BACK TO THE SCHOOL WITH GOPAL.



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